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COPY NO.CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
14 January 1955MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
SUBJECT: Hammarskjold's Impressions of
Chou En-lai

REFERENCE:

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1. The reference cable, reporting a short private talk between UN Secretary General Hammarskjold and Ambassador Allison and General Hull, provides an interesting account of Hammarskjold's impressions of Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai. The reported impressions are disturbingly reminiscent of those of other non-Communist leaders whose good will, at various times and in varying degrees, has been exploited by Chou for Communist purposes. The cable suggests that Chou has given for Hammarskjold an extremely accomplished performance and that the UN Secretary General is unaware or is only dimly aware that Chou is a specialist in performances of this type.

2. Hammarskjold is reported to have expressed "considerable admiration for Chou's intellectual and general ability," and to have said that toward the end of their talks Chou appeared to become "more human" and did not resort to the normal Communist clichés. There is no doubt that Chou, within the limits of his doctrinaire world-view, is an unusually intelligent man, and that he is unusually capable in advancing the objectives of that world-view. Almost all observers have confirmed that Chou does not conduct himself, in conversation with Westerners, in the same style as the mechanical, predictable, obviously hostile Communists most often encountered. Many of these observers have failed to appreciate, however, that Chou's record is that of an orthodox international Communist of the most single-minded and ferocious type. The evidence is strong that Chou, while sufficiently adroit to adopt persuasively the means and manners of the non-Communist world when it appears to his advantage, has no sympathy whatever with non-Communist ends and values.

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3. Hammarskjold is also reported to have said that Chou "succeeded in a most difficult role in making clear to him, Hammarskjold, what he wanted him to understand from the foreign policy aspects of this whole matter and yet at the same time gave perhaps a completely different impression for domestic consumption of what had been said and agreed to...." Although this passage is not clear, it suggests a more important discrepancy than that between the private position and the public position of Chou. It suggests that Chou may have led Hammarskjold to believe that Peiping would pursue a course of action--in regard to the airmen or any other issue discussed--which Chou in fact has no intention of pursuing. The passage does not permit this interpretation to be offered with confidence, but it is a matter of record that Chou has persistently been able to induce non-Communist officials to view Chinese Communist policy in the most hopeful and unrealistic light, and that such officials have been persistently disappointed in Chinese Communist policy as it later developed.

4. Finally, Hammarskjold is reported to have said in Tokyo that Chou appeared in private conversation to be a "very worried man." This is another of Chou's favorite postures. When he judges the audience to be receptive, it is Chou's practice to offer apparent confidences as regards his "alarm" or "concern" about situations making for "tension" or representing a "threat of war" or indicating other disagreeable prospects. Chou then solicits the co-operation of all men of good will, among whom his listener is of course prominent, in working to reduce the given tension or threat; the courses suggested by Chou are invariably found to coincide with Chinese (and international) Communist objectives. This particular routine of Chou's is simply a sophisticated version of the world Communist "peace" campaign.

5. The victims of Chou's skill, in performances of this type, have been many. They include Chinese Nationalist leaders, Chinese liberals, American diplomats, American newsmen, American military officers, and the officials and journalists and military men of many other countries. Among them, at least for a time, were General George Marshall and Dr. J. Leighton Stuart. More recent victims include a series of Indian officials (including to some degree, Prime Minister Nehru) and Burmese Premier U Nu.

6. The record of conversations between Chou and General Marshall in 1945 and 1946--some of which are included in the US White Paper on China--is most instructive in this connection. Chou impressed General Marshall, who had had little

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experience with Communists and none with Communists of Chou's range and agility, in much the same way that he is reported to have impressed Hammarskjold. General Marshall is continually found, in the record of his first months of acquaintance with Chou, to be persuaded of Chou's "sincerity" and to be hopeful of allaying Chou's "suspicions." There is some question, judging from the record, that General Marshall ever became fully aware that Chou's sincerity was (and is) the sincerity of a sincere orthodox Communist, and Chou's suspicions those of an expert negotiator alert to extract the last possible advantage from his opponent.

7. Some useful impressions of Chou En-lai are included in the feature story of TIME magazine of 10 May 1954, a study of Chou under the appropriate caption of "The Great Dissembler." Although the story contains a certain amount of misinformation and doubtful information, it is believed to be essentially accurate in its treatment of Chou.

8. The basic error of non-Communist diplomats who have been favorably impressed by Chou En-lai appears to have been their belief that they could influence, for the better, a man so obviously intelligent and seemingly sympathetic as Chou. The record has not supported them in that view. It is the strong belief of this office that Chou, as an orthodox Communist, is not interested in being influenced by non-Communist leaders but, on the contrary, is interested in and demonstrably capable of exerting his influence on them. It is of course possible that Chou, for reasons deriving from a contest for power, will eventually throw his weight with forces in the Chinese Communist movement seeking to reduce or eliminate the bond with the Soviet Union, and it seems remotely possible that Chou is still sufficiently flexible to become genuinely sympathetic to an antitotalitarian view; but there is no reason for optimism on either count.

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